



News Release

WEST VIRGINIA DISTRICT

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SBA to Honor West Virginia's Top Small Businesses

Awards Ceremony in Morgantown on May 29

CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA — This week the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) kicks off National Small Business Week, designed to recognize the nation's top small business entrepreneurs, and business advocates. Events take place in San Francisco, Kansas City, Boston, and Washington, D.C. To find more information on events or to watch the events live visit: <http://www.sba.gov/nsbw/>.

Judy McCauley, SBA's West Virginia District Director invites everyone to join her in recognizing state award winners Thursday, May 29, in Morgantown at the Erickson Alumni Center in conjunction with the 2014 Teaming to Win Conference. For more information visit: <http://teamingtowin.org/>.

"Small businesses are very important to our state as they represent 96 percent of all employers," says McCauley. "Not only are they important but West Virginia is home to some extraordinary small business entrepreneurs and it is my honor to be able to recognize the best of the best during SBA's West Virginia 2014 Small Business Awards Ceremony."

The 2014 award winners include:

Small Business Person of the Year: Kenneth Allman - PracticeLink and MountainPlex Properties, Inc. Hinton, WV; Nominated by Cloe Mathews, Former Hinton Mayor

Allman is President and CEO of PracticeLink and MountainPlex Properties. PracticeLink connects more than 5,000 hospitals, healthcare groups and medical practices each year with the physicians and advanced practitioners they need. MountainPlex Properties has turned Hinton, WV into a location where tourists want to visit and residents want to live. Under the MountainPlex Properties umbrella lives RadioAM 1380, Historic Hinton's Hometown Radio; The Ritz Theatre; The Guest House Inn on Courthouse Square; The Market; MountainPlex Properties Lawncare; The Townhouse; The Magnolia Room, and more.

Exporter of the Year: Chad Remp - Wheeling Truck Center, Inc. Wheeling, WV; Nominated by Diego Gattesco, International Trade Administration

Wheeling Truck Center is a Volvo Truck dealer in Wheeling, WV. The Center was founded in 1933 by C.H. Remp and is operated by Ronald Remp, (third generation) and Chad Remp, (fourth generation) currently operating the business. Since February 2010, Wheeling Truck Center has sold in 93 different countries.

Family-Owned Small Business of the Year: Christopher Wendling – A.F. Wendling, Inc. Buckhannon, WV; Nominated by Stephen Foster, Upshur County Development Authority

Wendling of Buckhannon, WV celebrated 100 years as a family owned and operated business in 2013. From its inception as a door to door meat delivery business, the company has grown to become the largest independent food distributor in the state of WV with a complete line of meats, produce, seafood and packaged products. Chris Wendling, the current president and third generation family member, assumed direction of the company in 2006, and has doubled sales through aggressive growth and acquisition of new product lines. A.F. Wendling serves 53 counties in WV, plus select locations in OH, MD and PA.

Young Entrepreneur of the Year: Bridget Rowsey – Bridget's Dance Academy
Huntington, WV; Nominated by Amber Wilson, Small Business Development Center

Rowsey is the owner of Bridget's Dance Academy (BDA) a dance studio located in Huntington, WV. BDA has been seeing consistent and significant growth for the last three and a half years. BDA teaches all styles of dance, including Jazz, Lyrical, Hip Hop, Tap, Ballet, Contemporary, and Acro-Dance to all ages. Rowsey has over 15 years of dance experience; her experience is complemented by a degree in Business Management with a minor in Economics and a secondary minor in Dance.

Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year: Jeannette King – Strategic Resolution Experts
Martinsburg, WV; Nominated by Christina Lundberg, Small Business Development Center

King, Navy Veteran, founded Strategic Resolution Experts, Inc. in 2007 to provide strategic management and IT consulting services to the federal civilian and defense agencies. She has built a management team of certified professionals and continues to show her support for veterans overseas and in the U.S. SRE is the largest corporate sponsor for Final Salute, Inc. King also serves on the board of this organization which provides safe and suitable housing for homeless female veterans and their children.

Women in Business Champion of the Year: Pam Neely – State Farm
Martinsburg, WV; Nominated by Christina Lundberg, Small Business Development Center & Tina Combs, Martinsburg – Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce

Neely is the owner of a local State Farm business and has been active in the Martinsburg-Berkeley County Chamber of Commerce as Chair of the Women's Network. In 2013, Neely coordinated the Chamber's third annual Women's Network Book Club. Neely led a networking session that included a variety of techniques she learned in her corporate work. The Chamber's Women's Network under Pam's leadership provided professional development to 138 women in the workshops and 71 women in the conference.

West Virginia's top small business SBA lenders will also be recognized during the celebration: **West Virginia Community Bank of the Year** is Community Trust Bank, Inc., which approved 7 SBA-guaranteed loans in West Virginia totaling \$343,500; **West Virginia Lender of the Year** is Huntington National Bank, which approved 77 SBA-guaranteed loans for over \$20.1 million.

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The mission of the SBA is to aid, counsel, assist and promote the interests of small businesses by providing financial, procurement and business development assistance and advocating on their behalf within the government. All SBA programs are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis.